

Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance

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The City Centre for Everyone

#UrbanThinkersCampus

OUTCOME REPORT

BELFAST Action Plan

IFHP

International
Federation for
Housing and
Planning

The City Centre for Everyone

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Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement, Ulster University, Ireland.

Andrew Haley, Landscape Architect and Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group, United Kingdom.

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Executive summary

The International federation for Housing and Planning is pleased to report that our Urban Thinkers Campus on “The City Centre for Everyone” held 31st May – 2nd June 2017 in Belfast, was a great success:

The objective of the Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) was to assist the implementation stage of the New Urban Agenda by focusing on several of the World Urban Campaign’s “The City We Need” principles, namely how to make cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being.

“The City Centre for Everyone”

A prevailing issue seen in many cities, is that lower income communities, often located in a ring around the city centre and often burdened with high levels of unemployment and deprivation, generally do not benefit from the nearby economic prosperity and social, educational and health facilities at the core of the city. The city centre and communities at the circumference tend to feel detached and segregated from each other. And there is a sense of threat of new occupants in the city centre. Belfast is one such city challenged with just this, and thus the “The City Centre for Everyone” was the focus of the UTC Belfast.

Belfast is a post-industrial city with a ring of communities encircling the city centre. While Belfast has reasonably good social housing, the communities are not thriving. Both the City Council and the university, have identified the problem of the integration of these communities with the city centre, new private housing and student housing. Due to Belfast’s history, and a general sense of distance with the city centre, still today Belfast has trouble integrating its communities in the city centre. The emphasis of this UTC was to get an understanding of why this is happening and how this problem is to be addressed, and to identify solutions which could foster some sense of integration of communities with the city centre. This UTC gathered expertise from the UK and Ireland together with an array of international expertise to focus on knowledge exchange and possible best practices relevant to Belfast in particular, and applicable in similar scenarios.

The Urban Thinkers’ Thoughts

The 3-day UTC event comprised of presentations, discussions, study tours, and informal conversations, resulting in an agreed upon Action Plan. Urban Labs were the vehicles for gathering the thoughts and inputs of our experts and participants, and coming up with relevant scenarios, and for drafting the main action points. Here are some of the points addressed:

*To ensure **people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment**, there is the need for more and better visibility, to inform on employment opportunities; better coordination, to facilitate the sharing of information; partnerships, to work collaboratively towards the shared goal of enhancing long-term employment outcomes and economic growth; and anticipate future changes in employment: arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs / roles as a consequence of this.*

*To ensure **inner city communities feel more physically integrated into the city, and that affordable housing is delivered alongside private housing and student housing in an inclusive and equitable city**, Belfast City Council and the social housing groups should consider ways of spreading the social housing across the city to avoid concentration; focus on mixed use to create new vibrant urban fabric for the citizens; create a communications*

strategy to promote citizens' engagement and participation; assess best case practices as a source of inspiration.

*To ensure the **health and wellbeing of inner city communities*** there is a need to raise awareness and promote health and planning, as well as to promote more effective local planning. Planning should be acknowledged as a key tool enabling the health and well-being of citizens. Planning legislators should incorporate legislation pertaining to health into the planning system for a more effective adoption of health led planning approaches. Academia should use its experts and its authority to promote health in planning, strengthen health and well-being components within planning degrees, and contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health and the effectiveness of planning interventions on this issue. The City Council should develop a delivery plan to improve life expectancy, and commit to proactively engaging with planners, and to raise awareness of planning impact, as well as to increase capacity building.

*To ensure **'citizens response' in the successful implementation of urban policies***, empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the 'Civic Capital' of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all the inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met. This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region.

*To enhance the **links between inner city neighbourhoods and their city centres***, there is the need to prevent urban sprawl, and to prevent the suburban flight of culturally- and economically- active community members. Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner-city communities. In Belfast, the Westlink and the East Side 'shatter zone' keep communities physically isolated and inward-looking. For Belfast, there is also the need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers. The removal of physical barriers is a first step to overcoming this. Also, the need to create equitable 'meeting spaces' for all communities is paramount. The municipality should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst.

This Urban Thinkers Campus was held in partnership with the Belfast City Council; the Royal Town Planning Institute; the Town and Country Planning Association; Ulster University; the Royal Society of Ulster Architects; the Academy of Urbanism; the Ministerial Advisory Group; the Commonwealth Association of Planners; the Institute of Civil Engineers; and the Irish Planning Institute.

34 professionals in the fields of urban planning, economic development, architecture, housing, urban governance and leadership participated as Speakers and Urban Lab Leaders, sharing their knowledge, raising questions, and challenging the participants to express their concerns and their visions, in order to identify potential solutions through a collective effort and to agree in actions that will assist in making cities more cohesive, inclusive and fair to everyone. Over one hundred delegates attended the event. There was good representation from key stakeholder groups including: NGOs, Public Sector, Private Sector, Academics, Students, Community Leaders, Politicians and Civil Society.

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1 Introduction

The International Federation for Housing and Planning, together with its partners, hosted an Urban Thinkers Campus this Spring in Belfast, from May 31st to June 2nd, on the overall theme of “The City Centre for Everyone”.

The objective of the Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) was to assist the implementation stage of the New Urban Agenda by focusing on several of the World Urban Campaign’s “The City We Need” principles, namely how to make cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being.

“The City Centre for Everyone”

One issue that has been identified in some cities is that lower income communities, located in a ring of social housing around the city centre and often suffering high levels of unemployment and deprivation, do not generally benefit from the nearby economic prosperity and social, educational and health facilities the city centre has to offer. They tend not to feel part of the city centre and are often segregated from each other. The choice of holding this Campus in Belfast, was due to the fact that Belfast is a good example of just that. Belfast is a post-industrial city with a ring of communities surrounding the city centre and living in reasonably good social housing but still not thriving. The City Council and the relocated city centre university have both identified the problem of integrating these communities with the city centre and with new private and student housing.

Belfast

Belfast has a proud Victorian heritage and prospered in the 19th and early 20th centuries due to shipbuilding, linen manufacturing and other engineering industries until the post WW2 era. As these industries were relocated within the world economy Belfast suffered inner city unemployment. In the post industrial era, a relatively high proportion of households became dependent on state benefits and the amount of long-term unemployment became a major social issue.

During the post WW2 period, the city of Belfast suffered from a continuing population decline accentuated by the Troubles which started in the late 1960s. The decline was driven in part by a general exodus from Northern Ireland caused by lack of jobs and later, by escalating sectarian divisions. Due to the sectarian violence that dominated inner-city Belfast, many companies chose to locate in industrial estates outside the city boundaries, in the suburbs or in smaller towns beyond that. Also, the impact of the Troubles on quality of life and the shortage of well-paid jobs meant that more highly skilled workers tended to leave Belfast, and the working class inner areas of the city became more dominated by worklessness. Middle class residents moved to the suburbs to avoid the sectarian divisions and by the 1970s/1980s the city centre was avoided except for day time office employment. As part of the response to the Troubles a new central housing agency was set up to provide social housing. This was highly successful in developing mainly two storey housing throughout N Ireland including in inner city Belfast. Later in the 1980s Housing Associations were set up to build new social housing and the central housing authority continued to manage their existing social housing stock and provide oversight to the Housing Associations. Now in inner city Belfast social housing is of high quality but the inner

city is clearly divided into Protestant communities and Catholic communities with little intermixing except in the city centre itself.

Aim of the Urban Thinkers Campus

Due to its history, today Belfast still has problems in integrating its inner-city communities with each other and with the city centre. Thus, the emphasis of this UTC was on understanding why this is still the case, how could this problem be addressed, and to find solutions to ensure communities feel integrated with the city centre and its prospering economy and educational/cultural life. This UTC gathered expertise from the UK and Ireland as well as from across the world with the intention of focusing on best practices and learning from these examples.

Partners

The UTC Belfast “The City Centre for Everyone” was held in partnership with the Belfast City Council; the Royal Town Planning Institute; the Town and Country Planning Association; Ulster University; the Royal Society of Ulster Architects; the Academy of Urbanism; the Ministerial Advisory Group; the Commonwealth Association of Planners; the Institute of Civil Engineers; and the Irish Planning Institute.

Thirty-four professionals in the fields of urban planning, economic development, architecture, housing, urban governance and leadership participated as Speakers and Urban Lab Leaders, sharing their knowledge, raising questions, and challenging the participants to express their concerns and their visions. Over one hundred delegates attended the event. There was good representation from the key stakeholder groups including: Non-Governmental Organisations, Public Sector, Private Sector, Academics, Students, Community Leaders, Politicians and Civil Society.



2 Urban Thinkers Sessions



Session 1: Housing for Everyone in the Central City

Eileen Patterson, Director of Communities, Radius Housing Association

Ian Snowden, Director of Housing NI Department for Communities

The session of the UTC started with a presentation of the different challenges that the City of Belfast faces, highlighting the most crucial issues that the city has to overcome in order to create a liveable city centre and a city centre for everybody.

Addressed issues	Outcome
Residential segregation Accommodating new homes Housing improvement and reuse of empty homes New social and affordable housing challenges Housing intervention as a driver for regeneration	Future housing in the central city needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Careful planning• Commitment and investment• Key city centre sites City's challenges:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract people to live in the centre • Plan for more than housing • Infrastructure and services need to be there • Connectivity and community engagement vital • Essential to have “shared space” i.e. space that both communities can use together • ‘Homes for All’ should be the objective.
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Session 2: Planning4people: Time to Reinvent Social Town Planning

Kate Henderson, CEO of Town and Country Planning Association

This session raised the question of how social town planning can be reinvented, emphasising that recognising and respecting human needs is the real challenge of planning but also a crucial element to work towards social justice, wellbeing and create healthy cities.

Addressed issues	Outcome
How can we make places better? What are the social objectives of the planning system today? How can we reunite planning with public health? Does planning have a role in tackling poverty? Is it time to re-think the social purpose of planning?	Planning is mainly linked with economic growth and has been disconnected from people’s lives Social purposes should be a basic part of the planning process The need for affordable and sustainable housing touches every single community Creating better places is about understanding the impact of the physical environment on our health and wellbeing Political responsibility is essential

Session 3: Health, Wellbeing and Planning for the Inner City

Trudi Elliot, CEO of Royal Town Planning Institute

This session focused on the cities’ challenges being directly linked with the health and wellbeing of a community. Facts, statistics and different case studies revealed that wellbeing is a crucial element of sustainable growth.

Addressed issues	Outcome
Rapid urbanisation Poor housing Decline and depopulation Pollution Ageing population ‘Lifestyle’ diseases Food deserts	Local plans tend to neglect poverty Planning has a key role in poverty reduction and contributes to health and wellbeing Embed poverty and inequality within UK devolution initiatives Promote integrated, outcomes-led strategies at local government level

	Put pressure on governments to include into their agendas issues such as poverty and equality Not only chasing the new technologies but also need to connect them to local communities
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Session 4: Widening Access and Building Skills: Opportunities for the Inner City

Dr. Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement, Ulster University

The session focused on the problems that the City of Belfast is called to deal with and the role of Ulster University in this process. Ulster University aims to contribute in making the city centre more attractive and liveable by relocating one of its main campuses from the suburbs into the city centre and by involving all the different stakeholders in this process, including neighbouring inner city communities.

Addressed issues	Outcome
<p>City's challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregation of inner city living by religion background and neglected areas • Working class in the inner city while the middle class moved out to suburbs 	<p>What does it mean for a most contested but also most vacant area (like the city centre of Belfast) when a university comes in for the access and for the way that the city operates?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day time population in city centre is double the night time population • Inner city and suburbs have different local governments • Inner city areas are characterised by lack of mobility • The city centre operated only from 9am to 5pm during the Troubles period. Consequence: no residential history in the city centre. • The design of the city separates many of the working-class communities for the city centre and each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A building project, a culture project for the university but also a culture project for the city • 13,000 people will access on a daily bases a currently neglected zone between where people live and where people do business • Different stakeholders with different demands and needs must be heard • Global access, interconnections, collaboration, creating partnerships with local and national authorities are essential • The university will attract young people into the city centre and create a permanent flow of talents • The university acts not only as an educational provider but also as an employer
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Session 5: Integrating People and Place

Andrew Haley, Landscape Architect and Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group

The session highlighted the contradictions between the statistics on communities' challenges and the reality that these communities 'experience'.

Addressed issues	Outcome
<p>What is the picture of Belfast?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need to narrow down from the big picture of the city into the local areas, into the details and the complexity of characteristics that a city has• Belfast is a city characterised by contradictions: need to understand these contradictions• The challenge is to rationalise the statistics with the reality that people living in an area experience• Different ways to 'see' and deal with places• Connectivity problems between the different areas of the city	<p>Need to create room for discussion</p> <p>Engage the different stakeholders</p> <p>Need to understand the statistics and integrate them with people's perspectives</p> <p>Working together to gather the evidence, develop the knowledge and the intelligence from the data and then integrate this with the real experiences of those who are part of making the changes happen</p> <p>Need a political, social and community leadership alliance</p>

Session 6: Community Connectivity with the City- Dublin Case Study

Ali Grehan, Dublin City Architect

In this session, the 'Hidden Rooms' project, conducted in Dublin, was presented. The focus of the project was on enabling people to regenerate their neighbourhoods.

Addressed issues	Outcome
<p>How do we enable people to regenerate their built environment?</p> <p>The four steps to work with city planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invitation: the community calls all the different stakeholders to identify and work on the existing challenges• Need for community's commitment to make the process functional and beneficial• Preparations• Public workshop• Outcome: a strategic vision, not a prescriptive plan• Implementation	<p>Planning: need to apply a holistic approach, interdisciplinary knowledge is essential</p> <p>Planning should be objective</p> <p>Special places need special treatment</p> <p>Maintain democratic decision-making processes</p> <p>Pursue public and private funding</p>

Session 7: The City for all: The New Culture of Urbanism

Kevin Murray, Planning Consultant, Director of the Academy of Urbanism

The need to build a new culture of urbanism and to challenge the conventional way of thinking was the baseline of this session. Different case studies of mix-used public spaces in different cities were presented to highlight the fact that a city's infrastructure can have multiple uses and serve different needs.

Addressed issues	Outcome
A new culture of urbanism The challenge of conceptualising the project and not having the same approach to all the different case studies Community's and heritage trust Rethink road allocation to provide more space for public transport, cycling and walking Rethink public access and public space	Involving the community helps in building confidence Need to create public spaces as meeting points and a place for everyone Multiple uses of the existing infrastructure Better access in the different areas of a city and friendlier mobility In case there is not space for an alternative vehicle arrangement, shared slow flow space and people friendly slow vehicle environments might be the only solution A friendlier mobility solution might also include using the car

Optional Sessions

The third day of the UTC in Dublin was concluded with three optional sessions on:

- **Session 8: The Development and Integration of the new Dublin Institute of Technology Campus in Inner Dublin**, Dr Paul Horan, Head of Campus Planning DIT
- **Session 9: Radical Thinking on Inner City Dublin and the Cohesive City**, Dr Conor Skehan, lecturer at the Planning School DIT
- **Session 10: New Ideas to Re-Stitch the Central City**, Ali Grehan, Dublin City Architect

All three speakers mainly addressed the importance of ensuring community engagement in the planning and decision-making process to achieve the change that the community aims for. Planners should be able to understand and respect the momentum of the communities they are called to work for and with. The sessions also raised awareness on the need for better collaboration and co-ordination amongst the different stakeholders, the need to build partnerships and to have a vision and a clear strategy.





3 Urban Thinkers Labs

Urban Lab 1: Education, Employment and Employability

Led by: Ulster University and Belfast City Council

Chair: Dr Neale Blair, Faculty Partnership Manager, Ulster University

Summary

Urban Lab 1 aimed at creating an action plan in answering “*How can we ensure people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment?*”. The discussion touched on several interesting arguments pointing to the fact that education, employability, and economic growth are all interlinked and require an on-going dialogue to ensure that people have the skills necessary to access employment opportunities. Also, that to unlock the potential of young people there is a need to recognise and differentiate between employment and employability, and that being ‘work-ready’ is not simply about having qualifications, but it is also dependent on having the ‘right’ attitude towards employment (and employers). The need to link with people to highlight opportunities and nurture skills development is a continuous process, that requires commitment from both the individual but also the organization. Therefore, a life-long approach needs to be in place. There is a need to be realistic in identifying the skills necessary to enable steps towards employment, and let this inform the development of interventions with an awareness of how local communities can be assisted to reap the economic and social mobility benefits that may emerge from investment projects in their area.

Action Points

1. **Visibility:** a lot of innovative and effective programmes/initiatives are being delivered across Belfast, however they need to be better promoted;
2. **Coordination:** need to have a joined-up platform to facilitate the sharing of information;
3. **Partnership:** continuous dialogue (through various means) across all stakeholders – individuals, employers, and education providers.
4. **Learn from elsewhere:** national and international case study examples can be helpful in refining programmes/initiatives in Belfast, e.g. online employer platform (Scotland).
5. **Anticipate future changes in employment:** arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs/roles as a consequence of this.
6. **Use all tools available (particularly in the public sector):** this may include powers relating to developer contributions to ensure that local communities benefit from large scale development projects i.e. where a developer contributes some of their profit to local training or employment initiatives.

Urban Lab 2: Housing: Social and Tenure Mix and Integration

Led by: International Federation for Housing and Planning

Chair: Anette Galskjøt, CEO IFHP

Summary

Urban Lab 2 aimed at creating an action plan in answering “*How can we ensure inner city communities feel more physically integrated into the city? How can affordable housing be delivered alongside private housing*”

and student housing in an inclusive and equitable city?”. Two different housing groups presented projects accomplished in Belfast with a focus on ‘shared housing’. In Northern Ireland, this term means a mix of both Protestant and Catholic occupiers. International inspiration from Gothenburg and Berlin was given for comparison. Social housing projects in Belfast are subject to strict regulation which dictates who will live in the social housing based on need and allocation of points to reflect various aspects of ‘need’. The housing associations therefore have little influence on the mix of tenures in their developments and there is a risk of concentration of a certain religious group of tenants in new housing with no real integration. Spurred by the cases from both Gothenburg and Berlin, as well as input from Copenhagen, Urban Lab 2 discussed various ways of breaking up the concentration of social housing to be able to create new diverse and integrated neighbourhoods.

Action Points

1. **Smaller developments spread across the city.** Belfast City Council and the social housing associations should consider ways of spreading social housing across the city to avoid concentration i.e. think in smaller developments of say 25-30 houses which may be integrated in existing neighbourhoods in Belfast. Also, focusing on mixed use to create a new vibrant urban fabric for the citizens was discussed. Citizens’ engagement and participation was perceived to be very important here and an extensive communications strategy should be developed. Also, it should be researched what the ideal percentage of social housing in any given area is. In Copenhagen, e.g. the city uses a 25% guideline. Looking at co-benefits of this strategy as well as unintended consequences should be analysed.
2. **Cooperation between Northern Irish housing groups and housing groups from abroad.** Belfast City Council and the housing groups may find it valuable to engage with housing groups from the UK and other countries to study best practice from these countries. IFHP could be a neutral platform for such interchange and cooperation.

Urban Lab 3: Health and Wellbeing of Inner City Communities

Led by: Royal Town Planning Institute and Town and Country Planning Association

Chair: Trudi Elliott, CEO RTPi

Summary

Urban Lab 3 aimed at creating an action plan in answering *“How do we ensure the health and wellbeing of inner city communities?”*. During the lab, the discussion was focused on planning as a key delivering tool for the health and wellbeing of citizens. Some of the key principles on how to create and plan for healthier cities were discussed, namely that planning legislators should make promoting health legally enforceable in the planning system. To achieve healthier cities, car dependency, good transport planning, access to healthy food, the increase of food deserts, amongst other issues need to be addressed. Environmental issues and their integration in planning practices are also key aspects for healthy cities. Rediscover planning at the neighbourhood level, and promote effective community engagement were also pointed out as keys to increase health and wellbeing. Belfast is part of the World Health Organisation healthy city partnership and the Council’s vision is to be a leader in healthy cities. The Council is therefore piloting a number of initiatives e.g. focus on child friendly places through shaping healthier neighbourhoods of children; Kidspace initiative pop

up activities; walkability assessment for healthy ageing - to engage older people in assessing their environment, and looking for evidence based solutions to achieve that status.

Action Points

1. **Raise awareness and promote health and planning.** The organizations involved should increasing their personal knowledge regarding health and wellbeing in planning, incorporate it into current and future work and in government consultations, host events/conferences that raise awareness on planning and health;
2. **Promote more effective local planning.** Academia should use its position and experts to do so, and strength health and wellbeing components within planning degrees. Contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health;
3. **Promote the role of good urban design** in creating health and well-being (e.g. New York City parks without borders);
4. Support development of ways to **implement the New Urban Agenda** locally;
5. **Take action on health and wellbeing.** Belfast Healthy Cities will develop & pilot engagement tools and innovative ways to integrate health into the built environment;
6. **Increase capacity building** by producing learning materials (e.g. online learning modules).

Urban Lab 4: Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance

Led by: Queens University Belfast

Chair: Dr M. Satish Kumar, School of the Built and Natural Environment, Queens University Belfast

Summary

Urban Lab 4 aimed at creating an action plan in answering *“How far is the building of ‘trust’ a key principle towards ensuring ‘citizens response’ in the successful implementation of urban policies?”*. Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the ‘Civic Capital’ of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met. This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements. There is a critical role for language and culture in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, thereby strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship which is far more urgent for the city of Belfast. At the same time while demanding the application of new technologies in the creation of smart cities, one cannot ignore the critical digital divide which remains embedded across the poorer parts of the city of Belfast.

Action Points

1. Building trust as essential to urban decision making and the creation of a transparent accountable systems.
2. Ensuring ***decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen*** and that constant checks are made to verify that actions at the City Council level are justified.
3. Start with small projects: Identify the low hanging fruits for implementation towards trust in community building and stakeholder networking.

4. Mapping of capacity-building initiatives on the ground for both governmental bodies and citizens to contribute and influence urban planning schemes.
5. Action Plans emphasising co-design and ownership of urban plans and projects across public, private and people's partnership (*PPPP*).
6. Acknowledging key projects of scale/ micro-projects contributing to urban fabric and community empowerment.
7. Heritage and prosperous streets - revaluing heritage ("here Heritage is a living knowledge of history").
8. Celebrating Best Practices in the City of Belfast as an Exhibition.
9. Development of civic leadership for the City by targeting primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Belfast.
10. Promoting asset-based approach to skill development and thereby organising inclusive community involvement.
11. Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in the decision-making processes is a must to deepen the '*Civic Capital*' of the City of Belfast.
12. Engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met.
13. Commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region.
14. The critical role of language and culture in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, thereby strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship is far more urgent for the city of Belfast.
15. Application of new technologies in the creation of smart cities for efficient delivery of services, one cannot ignore the *critical digital divide* which remains embedded across the poorer parts of the city of Belfast.

Urban Lab 5: Physical Integration of the City Centre with the Inner City

Led by: Academy of Urbanism

Chair: Kerri Farnsworth, Academy of Urbanism

Summary

Urban Lab 5 aimed at creating an action plan in answering "*How can we enhance the links between inner city neighbourhoods and their city centres?*". Preventing urban sprawl, and the loss of culturally- and economically-active residents to the suburbs, is an issue in many cities but notably Belfast. Retaining and attracting a diverse resident and business community is key. Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner-city communities. In Belfast, the Westlink and the East Side 'shatter zone' ensure that some communities remain physically isolated and inward-looking. The Lab was unified in the view that physical integration alone of the city and inner city does not and will not work. Long-term investment in both horizontal and vertical activation & animation is needed. New spaces & places need time to bed themselves into the psycho-geography of the city and the mental map of citizens; psychological barriers as well as physical barriers will need to be overcome.

Action Points

1. **Intensification and Densification of the inner city.** Local planning authorities should be reinforcing this through the planning process and policy, and by encouraging the societal mindset shift that may be needed to achieve this eg. promoting the 'living above the shop'-type ethos. Avoid the 'Bilbao effect' – avoid creating major destinations (e.g the Guggenheim) which may attract new visitors, but in reality can act as a drain and hindrance to local community networks and businesses.
2. **Removing the Physical Barriers.** Belfast municipality and the Transport Authority should jointly evaluate and prepare a strategic vision to address the city's spatial barriers, and consider trialling low-cost temporary/interim solutions (as often occurs in European countries notably The Netherlands). Consideration also need to be given to connections to radial routes, as many commented that E-W linkages in the city are poor; and the connectivity between transport hubs. For Belfast, there was a need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers too, but removing any physical barriers which may underpin these is a first step.
3. **Importance of Quality of the Built Environment, notably Public Space.** Whilst streets are critically important as connectors and creators of the urban living environment, they will not work unless they have attractors and destinations. The quality of their design and upkeep is paramount, with both being an ideal opportunity for a true 2-way transparent engagement with citizens in co-creation and long-term custodianship. Cost-efficient interim/meanwhile uses can be a part of this drive, and a great way to test drive ideas with residents (and possibly even crowdfund, as for example with the 'Yellow Bridge' (Luchtsingel) in Rotterdam).
4. **"Slow Urbanism".** A slower, organic rate of change in the city facilitates and supports behavioural change. It allows accidents, 'edginess' and/or unplanned uses to emerge, of which citizens can take ownership of and champion. More critically it allows citizens the time and space to develop trust with the promoters of new development, and to move beyond the tipping point from resistance to agreement & championing. Inherent within this also is an acceptance that change in cities has to be a long-term financial commitment. This may be resisted by private investors, but is possible – as illustrated by the likes of Manchester ONE public-private Joint Venture in Manchester.
5. **Activation and Animation of Spaces & Places.** In Belfast, the need to create equitable 'meeting spaces' for all communities is paramount. The municipality should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst: for example, integrating a school or a creche into new city centre developments.
6. **Transparency in Investment Decisions.** A key factor in gaining community buy-in the new city spaces and places is facilitating involvement and ownership of the decision-making process. Whilst full-blown participatory budgeting (as very successfully implement in the city of Lisbon in Portugal) would be the ideal scenario, adopting component elements of this participatory budgeting process alone will go a long way to an acceptable solution. Options for investment should be assessed against a range of criteria including socio-economic and community considerations, and the promoters of the development should make that criteria transparent and open to the public; citizens should be involved in shortlisting and/or selection. Tools such as GIS should be used to analyse existing movement patterns and explain the rationale behind proposed new routes/movement patterns to citizens.



4 Conclusion and way forward

The 3-day UTC event comprised of presentations, discussions, study tours, and informal conversations, resulting in an agreed upon Action Plan. The Urban Labs focused on 5 topics that guided the discussions and that culminated in the proposed Action Plan. The discussions touched many interesting points and created good action points and a long-term commitment for partners to work together.

*To ensure **people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment***, there is the need for more and better visibility, to inform about employment opportunities; better coordination, to facilitate the sharing of information; partnerships, to work collaboratively towards the shared goal of enhancing long-term employment outcomes and economic growth; and anticipate future changes in employment: arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs / roles as a consequence of this.

*To ensure **inner city communities feel more physically integrated into the city, and that affordable housing is delivered alongside private housing and student housing in an inclusive and equitable city***, Belfast City Council and the social housing associations should consider ways of spreading social housing across the city to avoid concentration; focus on mixed use to create a new vibrant urban fabric for the citizens; create a communications strategy to promote citizens' engagement and participation; assess best case practices as a source of inspiration.

*To ensure the **health and wellbeing of inner city communities*** there is a need to raise awareness and promote health and planning, as well as to promote more effective local planning. Planning should be acknowledged as a key tool enabling the health and well-being of citizens. Planning legislators should incorporate legislation pertaining to health into the planning system for a more effective adoption of health led planning approaches. Academia should use its experts and its authority to promote health in planning, strengthen health and well-being components within planning degrees, and contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health and the effectiveness of planning interventions on this issue. Belfast City Council should develop a delivery plan to improve life expectancy, and commit to proactively engaging with planners, and to raise awareness of planning's impact on health, as well as to increase capacity building.

*To ensure **'citizens response' in the successful implementation of urban policies***, empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the 'Civic Capital' of the City of Belfast. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all the inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met. This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region.

*To enhance the **links between inner city neighbourhoods and their city centres***, there is the need to prevent urban sprawl, and to prevent the suburban flight of culturally- and economically- active community members. Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner-city communities. In Belfast, the Westlink and the East Side 'shatter zone' keep communities physically isolated and inward-looking. For Belfast, there is also the need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers. The removal of physical barriers is a first step to overcoming this. Also, the need to create equitable 'meeting spaces' for all communities is paramount. The City Council should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst.

As a concluding remark and following on the Action Plan, discussions and on the Urban Labs proposals, it is recommended that there is commitment by the City of Belfast, and all the other lead partners to the UTC, to the suggestions made. These will impact the communities, promote a better integration between the city and its citizens, and help to advance and implement UN Habitat's New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal number 11.



5 Recommendations to national Governments and other Stakeholders

By 2050 the world urban population is expected to double thereby making urbanisation one of the most transformative trends in human history. The fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this context becomes far more relevant and critical. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) sets the framework on how cities should be planned and managed to promote sustainable urban development. The principles of the NUA - 'Leaving No One Behind', 'Ensure Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Economies' and 'Ensure Environmental Sustainability' are built around the SDGs, of which SDG11 aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". It was pointed out during the UTC that as of now the Belfast Local Development Plan remains silent on SDG 11 and arguably promotes a largely investor and developer driven vision of the city. For cities, such as Belfast, which is rapidly being cosmopolitanised beyond the traditional "orange and green", it is imperative that the principles of the NUA and the SDGs are integrated in the City's vision.

Also, high on the agenda is the issue of good urban governance. This includes three principle groups of actors: government, the private sector and civil society. It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships between many actors with different priorities. It is the reconciliation of these competing priorities that remains at the heart of the NUA. Urban governance is inextricably linked to the welfare of the citizenry and provides a platform which will allow citizens to improve their social and economic conditions. This is a measurable feature of the NUA. Therefore, the successful implementation of the NUA calls for endorsement of good urban governance. This is based on the acknowledged principles of *sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security*, and that these norms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

The principle of 'subsidiarity' is crucial here and aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at the local government level (in this case Belfast City Council) is justified. This calls for the greater participation of all stakeholders to reinvigorate trust in the urban process. Such form of decentralization and local democracy should improve the responsiveness of policies and initiatives to the priorities and needs of citizens in the city. In this regard, '*equity*' of access to decision-making processes and the basic necessities of urban life are critical for the successful delivery of local plans and aspirations, as it is the case of the evolving Local Development Plan for Belfast. At the same time, '*efficiency*' in the delivery of public services and in promoting local economic development is without doubt necessary for the future development of the city. In all this the call for '*transparency and accountability*' of decision-makers and all stakeholders must be reiterated. Without '*civic engagement and citizenship*', the NUA (and the evolving Local Development Plan for Belfast) remain a passive exercise. Indeed, living together in the City of Belfast is not a passive exercise and all stakeholders must actively contribute to the common good.

Local and national policies should complement each other. Dealing with making the cities more 1) socially inclusive and engaging; 2) affordable, equitable and inclusive; 3) economically vibrant and inclusive; and 4) safe, healthy and promoting well-being is a shared and inter-related responsibility. In this sense, it is recommended, for an effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda that **local governments:**

- Develop pilot engagement tools;
 - Public hearings, workshops, discussions and feedback on local plans.
- Increase their knowledge of New Urban Agenda, social challenges, areas challenges, citizen's participation etc.;
- Sharing knowledge with the different stakeholders. Bring together the public sector, private and civil society;
- Support research;
- Fair allocation of urban spaces;
- Housing projects, careful planning of new housing and how that can become part of the existing community;
- Increase access to basic urban facilities;
- Increased economic opportunities

And that, **national governments**:

- Work closely with local and other national governments, and research institutes, to identify best practices;
- Develop national planning and urban design policies;
- Develop policies to ensure youth can become fully integrated in the labour market;
- Add into their agendas poverty reduction programmes.

6 Monitoring and Reporting

The action plan approved puts the focus on five aspects considered to be crucial to achieve sustainable growth and create a “city for everyone”. To determine whether the priority areas are producing the intended results, and to verify if any improvement actions are needed, the following monitoring plan is recommended.

1) Education, Employment and Employability

- Map and monitor the level of interest in opportunities available to inner city communities to develop their employability skills, supported by initiatives across the education spectrum for example innovations within higher education such as the ‘Ulster Edge’ award from Ulster University;
- Embed ‘employability’ across university courses;
- Support the design and delivery of innovative social economy partnerships, for example East Belfast Mission’s programmes to expand horizons by giving opportunities to individuals to develop skills outside of their original ethno-religious environment;
- Use Belfast Harbour as an example of how to facilitate the access to employment and employability skills as a collaborator with the private sector; and create similar collaborations across the public and private sector;
- Belfast City Council to coordinate amongst all stakeholders to ensure awareness of opportunities.

2) Housing: Social and Tenure Mix and Integration

- Central government and its housing agencies to identify the current percentage of social housing, and research the ideal percentage of social housing in any given area;
- Belfast City Council and the housing associations to consider mixed tenure and mixed use alternatives;
- Create a cooperation platform led by IFHP between NI housing groups and housing groups from abroad.

3) Health and Wellbeing of Inner City Communities

- Assess and evaluate equity, e.g. detailed analysis of food insecurity; produce resource access maps; map air and noise pollution, and assess health and environmental inequalities;
- Adopt health led planning approaches and integrate environmental health with planning;
- Policies and practices to tackle car dependency, e.g. encourage increased modal share in commuting;
- Engage community involving all ages, to better assess health and wellbeing.

4) Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance

- Ensuring decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizens and that constant checks are made to verify that actions at the City Council level are justified.
- The City Council to develop a ‘citizen participation model’;
- Fiscal investment stimulating self-investment of tenants into their own houses;
- Conduct stakeholder analyses to consider as many voices as possible;
- Young Civic Leaders NI to inspire a new wave of urban planners and thinkers, and monitor their performance and levels of youth engagement;

- Create initiatives to ‘bring the classroom to the street’ to connect teaching practices with the surrounding urban environment;
- Use Pop-Up Urbanism initiatives as an experimental platform for data collection, inspiring collaboration and guiding design.

5) Physical Integration of the City Centre with the Inner City

- The City Council and the transport authority to prepare a strategic vision to address the city’s spatial barriers, and trialling low-cost temporary solutions;
- Monitor the integration level of public uses within new development;
- Development promoters to assess options for investment against socio-economic and community criteria, and make that criteria transparent and open to the public.
- Use GIS tools to analyse existing movement patterns and explain the rationale behind proposed new movement patterns to citizens.

In the short term

- The International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) will publish an outcome report of “The City Centre for Everyone” which will be shared with the WUC community, as well as with the IFHP community and all the ones present at our UTC. In addition, to the outcome report, all the documents presented and discussed during the UTC will be available online at IFHP’s website.
- The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), partners of the UTC Belfast, will write a blog about the UTC and its outcome which will be available on TCPA’s webpage.
- TCPA will hold a series of workshops and report on developers and wellbeing. The report is expected to be published at the end of 2017/early 2018.
- RTPI will participate in the World Town Planning Day on the 8th of November 2017 where their focus will be on the action plan outcome of UTC Belfast Urban Lab 3: Health and Wellbeing.
- The Universities involved in UTC (Ulster University and Queens University Belfast) will use their position and their experts to promote a more effective local planning system, conduct sessions at UK conferences and participate in the Ireland Planning Research conference in 2017.
- The Bakke Graduate University, participating in the UTC, aims to conduct a follow up UTC later in 2017 to explore how we can move forward and create healthier cities.
- Belfast City Council is also committed to increase their knowledge based on the UTC outcomes and to write a blog on UTC.
- IFHP will organize a webinar session with Belfast City Council and all the lead partners in August (2017) to get their commitment to the action plan and do a follow-up every six months.

In the long term

- Conducting a follow up event, in 5 years, in order to explore the extent of progress made, based to the current action plan, and reconsider and update, if needed, the action points - outcome and report back to UN-Habitat.

7 Annex

The annex contains the original Action Plans agreed in each Urban Lab (1 – 5).

Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus

Urban Lab 1:

Education, Employment and Employability

Belfast Harbour Office,

Corporation Square,

Belfast BT1 3AL

1st June 2017

Urban Lab Focus:

“How can we ensure people of all ages in inner cities can access education and employment?”

Chair: **Dr Neale Blair**, Faculty Partnership Manager, Ulster University

Discussant: **Dr Linda McElduff**, Lecturer, Ulster University

Insights and experiences from five practitioners exploring the Urban Lab focus

Shauna McCloy, Head of Employability, Ulster University:

Employability in a rapidly changing economy

- Importance of transition from school to university as students are not at an equal stage in their employability, knowledge and learning; all learners are different and have varying starting points on entry to third level education
- Students may come from a family background where they are the first to study at university and therefore one size does not fit all in terms of student support
- Importance of induction for students to understand future potential career pathways and employability
- Excellent opportunities available to students to develop their employability skills, supported by initiatives at Ulster such as the Ulster Edge; students must though take responsibility for accessing these opportunities and acquiring requisite skills
- Employability is embedded across all courses at Ulster, and is recognised at a strategic level within the University's '5 and 50' plan including the role of Ulster as a civic university
- Education, employability, and economic growth are all interlinked and require an on-going dialogue to ensure graduates have the skills necessary to access employment opportunities

Aoife Moody, Senior Head of Enterprise, Employment and Outcomes, The Prince's Trust:

Unlocking the potential of young people

- Must recognise the difference between employment and employability
- Being work-ready is not simply about having qualifications, but it is also dependent on having the 'right' attitude towards employment (and employers)
- Linking with people to highlight opportunities and nurture skills development is a continuous process, and requires commitment from both the individual and also the organisation that is providing experience leading to personal independence
- Soft skills – *for example: communication; creativity; problem solving; team working; leadership; time management* – are critical

- Cannot assume that young people have basic life skills, stability, or a role model within a regular home life context

Hazel Jones, Stepping Stone Team Manager, East Belfast Mission:

A life-long approach to employability

- Traffic light system to providing support – red, amber, green – where more intervention may be required for some individuals (red / amber) compared with others (green)
- For many people the work environment can be a new or alien experience, for example with processes and procedures (e.g. absence from work); therefore, training is essential for helping individuals to sustain employment
- Programmes are designed to expand horizons by giving opportunities to individuals to develop skills outside of their original ethno-religious environment
- Life skills – e.g. for managing money and day-to-day living – are essential to encourage individuals to lead productive lives where they can fulfil their potential and engage as full citizens

Jenni Barkley, Communications and Corporate Responsibility Manager, Belfast Harbour:

Beyond good neighbours: private sector support of education and skills development

- Belfast Harbour is a facilitator for accessing employment and employability skills as a collaborator with the private sector; this ensures a win-win for individuals and also the economy through provision of a skilled labour force, thus also serving to enhance the reputation and standing of all stakeholders involved
- Creativity and flexibility are important for opportunity providers, to ensure that skills gaps are met and also that young people are inspired into employment
- Attention is disproportionately focused on the most disadvantaged, yet there are also communities that of lesser disadvantage who also need support and access to opportunity

Ruth Rea, Economic Development Officer, Belfast City Council:

Expectations and reality: challenges and opportunities for local communities from major investment projects

- Co-ordination is key amongst all stakeholders to ensure awareness of opportunities and avoidance of duplication
- Need to be realistic in identifying the skills necessary to enable steps towards employment, and let this inform the development of interventions with an awareness of how local communities can be assisted to reap the economic and socio mobility benefits that may emerge from capital investment projects

Action planning - what will we do next?

Arising from discussion, Urban Lab 1 identified the following action areas for stakeholders:

1. **Visibility:** a lot of innovative and effective programmes / initiatives are being delivered across Belfast. However, individuals are not necessarily aware of these opportunities, or aware of them sufficiently in advance to enable their participation
2. **Coordination:** need to have a joined-up platform to facilitate the sharing of information
3. **Partnership:** continuous dialogue (through various means) across all stakeholders – individuals, employers, and education providers – to work collaboratively towards the shared goal of enhancing long-term employment outcomes and economic growth
4. **Learn from elsewhere:** national and international case study examples can be helpful in refining programmes / initiatives in Belfast, e.g. online employer platform (Scotland)
5. **Anticipate future changes in employment:** arising from technological advances and the redundancy of certain jobs / roles as a consequence of this
6. **Use all tools available (particularly in the public sector):** this may include, for example, powers relating to developer contributions to ensure that local communities benefit from large scale development projects

Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus

Urban Lab 2:

Housing – the Social and Tenure Mix and Integration

Clanmil Housing Association,

3 Waring Street,

Belfast BT1 2DX

1st June 2017

The Urban Lab 2 Action Plan

Urban Lab 2 was titled “Housing – the social and tenure mix and integration”

Two different housing groups presented great projects accomplished in Belfast with a focus on shared housing. In Northern Ireland, this has a special meaning of a mix of both Protestants and Catholics. International inspiration from Gothenburg and Berlin was given for comparison. Social housing projects in Belfast are subject to strict regulation which dictates who will live in the social housing and based on need. The housing groups have little influence of the mix of tenures in the developments and there is a risk of concentration of a certain group of inhabitants and no real integration.

Spurred by the cases from both Gothenburg and Berlin as well as input from Copenhagen Urban Lab 2 discussed various ways of breaking up the concentration of social housing to be able to create new diverse and integrated neighborhoods.

Two concrete proposals for Belfast City Council came up:

- **Smaller developments spread across the city:**

Belfast City Council and the social housing groups may consider ways of spreading the social housing across the city to avoid concentration. I.e. think in smaller developments of ex. 25-30 houses which may be integrated in existing neighborhoods in Belfast. Also, focusing on mixed use was discussed to create new vibrant urban fabric for the citizens. Citizens’ engagement and participation was perceived to be very important here and an extensive communications strategy should be developed. Also, it should be researched what the ideal percentage of social housing in any given area is. In Copenhagen e.g. the city uses a 25% guideline. Looking at co-benefits of this strategy as well as unintended consequences should be analysed.

- **Cooperation between Northern Irish housing groups and housing groups from abroad:**

Belfast City Council and the housing groups may find it valuable to engage with housing groups from the UK and other countries to study best practice from these countries. IFHP could be a neutral platform for such interchange and would be very happy to engage in such cooperation.

Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus

Urban Lab 3: Health and Wellbeing of Inner City Communities

Ulster University,
25-51 York Street,
Belfast BT1 1ED

1st June 2017

Led by: Trudi Elliott, Chief Executive, Royal Town Planning Institute and Kate Henderson, Chief Executive, Town and Country Planning Association

Chair, Trudi Elliott, CEO of RTPI

Urban lab focus: 'How to ensure the health and wellbeing of inner city communities'

Insights and experiences from five practitioners exploring the Urban lab Focus

1. Kate Henderson, TCPA: Reuniting health with planning

6 principles of health professional development of planning:

1. movement and access
2. open space, play and recreation
3. Access to healthy food
4. neighbourhood space
5. buildings(internal space and access)
6. local economy

- Planning is a key delivery tool and specialist health planners are emerging.
- Health impact assessments are helpful but it depends on who engages.

2. Professor Geraint Ellis, Queens University Belfast: Using the Planning System to Secure health and Wellbeing

- Presentation focussed on a Northern Ireland context: The popsicle analogy: the O'Keeffe an ice cream test i.e. can you let a small child leave home and buy an ice cream and return before it's melted? Only 60% of the NI population is in walking distance of a food outlet / shops
- Role of planning: Controls the built environment
- LT perspective: incorporates complexity and diversity of interests; is Democratic and participative; and Element of civilised society
- Nine healthy planning principles:
 1. Planning leg should make good health the legally enforceable aim of planning system
 2. Adopt health led planning approaches -as material consideration ,PH experts in planning team
 3. Get serious about car dependency -81 % of NI people travel by car to work
 4. Make active travel easy
 5. rediscover planning at the neighbourhood level
 6. integrate environmental health with planning-planning first line of defence against pollution

7. make places greener
8. Address health and environmental inequalities
9. Effective community engagement

3. **Jonna Monaghan and Laura McDonald, Belfast Healthy Cities: The Belfast Experience: children in local neighbourhoods**

Practical solutions in Belfast:

- Belfast is a World Health Organisation healthy city partnership
- The Council's vision is to be a leader in healthy cities
- The Council have piloted Health Impact Assessments but found them very resource intensive so not pursuing .
- Use the settlement health map.
- Looking for evidenced based solutions.
- Focus on child friendly places through shaping healthier neighbourhoods of children. They consulted 400 children and this forms part of Key stage 2 teaching resource. This resource is not yet on line. This focuses on 12 schools and on what children wanted. More green spaces and more walkable and controlled traffic.
- Kidspace initiative pop up activity shows child friendly spaces would attract families into the city.
- Also did a walkability assessment for healthy ageing - to engage older people in assessing their environment. Detailed results on what would help.
- 4 key messages:
 1. Engage communities of all ages
 2. Listen to local experiences
 3. Collaborate and
 4. Celebrate

4. **Jason Jordan, American Planning Association: the American Planning Association's health project**

- APA's health project is called: PLAN4HEALTH
- Areas of focus: Nutrition and Activity
- 5 recommendations from case studies:
 1. Role of good urban design in promoting health and well-being - see New York City parks without borders.
 2. Integrated planning -health in all policies approach for planning - see health in all policies toolkit. All Local Authority policies. Head a health and food system e.g. Trenton, New Jersey. 'Food swamps' are lots of food outlets selling crap food.
 3. Health by design-targeted implementation see Indianapolis - citizen driven and citizen led. Walkways – 'Moving Indy forward' initiative. Lots of data became accessible to community groups.
 4. Equity assessments and evaluation - In Austin looked at healthy food offered in one area but mayor has rolled it out across the whole area. Detailed analysis of food insecurity both usual data but also charities etc to layer over open data. North Austin resource map. Surveyed retailers about fresh food and vegetables a big issue - cost of refrigeration and linking shops and providers.

5. Reimagine the civic commons in Philo- led by Fairmont parks conservancy- relink community assets to communities. Remarkable park near challenged communities but they were not using it. Pilots in 4 other cities.

ACTION PLAN

Organisational and Personal Commitments of Workshop attendees

General Commitments from all participants:

- **Raise awareness and promote health and planning** by increasing personal knowledge, incorporating into current and future work and in government consultations, host events / conferences that raise awareness on planning and health including on World Town Planning Day on 8 November.
- **Write blogs and journal articles**
- **Help to increase capacity building** by producing learning materials for example online learning module, YouTube videos etc
- **Reading list:**
 1. **Royal Town Planning Institute** - RTPI Habitat III and COP 21 Information Hub: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/the-rtpi-near-you/rtpi-international/habitat-iii-and-cop21/>

Dementia and Town Planning (2017): <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/knowledge/practice/dementia-and-town-planning/>

Promoting Healthy Cities: http://rtpi.org.uk/media/1119674/rtpi_promoting_healthy_cities.pdf

Poverty, Place and Inequality (2016): http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1811222/poverty_place_and_inequality.pdf
 2. **Town and Country Planning Association** - Garden cities Guide on planning for wellbeing and health infrastructure in new and renewed communities: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>
 3. **Global Planners Network**: Delivering Better Development: the role of the urban and rural planner (2015) http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1539604/w2121_-_rtpi_international_audience_brochure_web_revised.pdf
 4. **Commonwealth Association of Planners**: Fiji Declaration – call for governments to implement the NUA: <http://www.commonwealth-planners.org/cap-fiji-declaration>
 5. **European Council of Spatial Planners** (ECTP-CEU): The Charter of European Planning (2013) - <http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/index.php/en/publications-8/the-charter-of-european-planning-213> and The European Charter on Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning processes (2015): <http://www.ectp-ceu.eu/images/stories/PDF-docs/Final-English-CharterParticipatoryDemocracy-s.pdf>

Individual Commitments from each participatory organisation

Organisation	Organisation commitments
Queens University Belfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the position of the university and its experts to promote a more effective local planning system • As an institution (a planning school), we are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensuring our students understand the consequences and opportunities of the planning system to promote and secure health and welfare outcomes – As a knowledge producer contribute to the growing evidence base of how the built environment can influence health and the effectiveness of planning interventions on this issue – Sessions at UK – Ireland planning research conference 2017 on cities and health – to include a stand. – Strengthen health and wellbeing components within planning degrees. – Contribute article to new academic journal cities and health
Bakke Graduate University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate a planning and health component into the existing poverty, diversity and social justice course for BGU • Currently undertake community development work in Homewood, a marginalized urban neighbourhood in Pittsburgh. Propose to bring a grocery store to the neighbourhood due to a food desert and bring planners and health leaders together on the project. • Planning an Urban Thinkers Campus later in 2017 for faith leaders and will explore having a health and planning track exploring how people of faith can work toward healthier cities.
American Planning Association (APA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a blog for the APA as part of a series on health and equity' • APA adopting a new health policy guide for US planners and will incorporate Belfast UTC ideas into that document. Will also allow UTC participants to comment on draft. • Convening a session on health in September to include UTC • Contribute to reading, watching, event list
Belfast City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase personal knowledge • Write blog • At BMA Obesity Forum raise lessons from the UTC • Development of delivery plan to improve life expectancy commit to proactively engage with planners and raise awareness of planning impact on irregularities and opportunity for involvement
Belfast Healthy Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action on health and wellbeing in planning • Sharing learning from other World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy Cities • Developing & piloting engagement tools and innovative ways to integrate health into the built environment • Supporting research • Capacity building • Support development of ways to implement the New Urban Agenda locally • WHO Secretariat role – create links between WHO and other networks. • Raise awareness – through rewriting Planning and health newsletter, ongoing projects which connect planning and health and promote health and planning messages • Reinforce the key messages gathered through our engagement process and try to act on these/implement programmes
Radius Housing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more involved in the education of health professionals on the benefits of healthy housing and the environment. • Attend more events to influence and develop awareness. • Currently have a number of projects all working for the same goal – more collaborations to give a stronger voice and influence more at a political level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the largest Housing Association in over 90 towns and cities, use this base to influence planning and how to make the environment more friendly for all generations.
Greenpeace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of the polluting nature of diesel cars Make a U-tube video showing the leap in toxic PM2.5 from parkland to road trafficked area. Conduct cycle rides contrasting and telling the stories behind the Connswater and Camber Greenways.
Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a blog for the TCPA website Write journal article Hold series of workshops and report on developers and wellbeing – report to be published end 2017/ early 2018. Reading list suggestion: Garden cities guide on planning for wellbeing and health infrastructure in new and renewed communities.
Ove Arup and Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out existing initiatives to promote wellbeing and cycling in Belfast and see where to get involved as a professional or volunteer. Write Arup thoughts piece – internal blog. Potentially open up the river as an asset, with improved walks and cycle networks. This can mean the river is an amenity space but also a means of connectivity and active travel.
NIHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobbying for change in the senior level attitudes to health and wellbeing in the development of new social housing both within NIHE and sponsor body Department for Communities. Need a shift away from focus on financial viability and also to revisit what NIHE can do with our land holdings e.g. for allotments etc. Support and promote health and wellbeing policy through NIHE's input as a statutory consultee to the new CDPs being developed at this time.
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare On-line training module on planning and dementia Write a blog to be on the UTC and publish on RTPI website . World Town Planning Day (8 November) event to have a focus on health and well being
Belfast Urban Studio CIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic lights and trees
Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In CAP's proposed 'State of the Planning Profession In the Commonwealth' questionnaire include a Question on health and wellbeing. Write blog on UTC for CAP web site
Just Space – London wide community led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press City Hall planners (London Plan, Environment Strategy, Health and Inequalities Strategy, Transport Strategy etc) to have health and planning embedded throughout these emerging strategies. Assist colleagues in Just Space in lobbying City Hall and to broaden Just Space's present focus on land use planning and community engagement to include health and planning.

Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus

Urban Lab 4:

Community Leadership and Participation in City Governance

RICS Offices,
9-11 Corporation Square,
Belfast BT1 3AJ

1st June 2017

Urban Lab 4 Focus:

“How far is the building of ‘trust’ a key principle towards ensuring ‘citizens response’ in the successful implementation of urban policies”?

Chair: Dr. M. Satish Kumar, Associate Professor/ Senior Lecturer, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen’s University Belfast.

Introductory Comments:

By 2050 the world urban population is expected to double thereby making urbanisation one of the most transformative trends in human history. The fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals in this context becomes far more relevant and critical. As of now the Belfast Local Development Plan remains uniquely silent on the SDG goals and promotes a largely investor and developer driven vision of the city.

The New Urban Agenda as endorsed by all nations in Quito acknowledges that culture and diversity are sources of enrichment and contributes directly to the sustainable development of cities. Here culture and by extension heritage matters for cities such as Belfast, which is rapidly being cosmopolitanised beyond the traditional blue and green, divide. Empowering the communities to play a distinct role in helping meet with the sustainable development initiatives is critical in this regard.

“Habitat III” is shorthand for a major global summit, formally known as the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, held in Quito, Ecuador on 17-20 October 2016. This conference was organised to ‘reinvigorate’ global political commitment towards sustainable development of towns and villages. It sets out a global urbanisation strategy for the next two decades. The ideas are to bring together key stakeholders and actors to define and action on policies, which have key implications for the future. The New Urban Agenda, which was announced, sets the framework on how cities should be planned and managed to promote sustainable urban development. This 2030 New Urban Agenda- ‘Leaving No One Behind’ is built around the Sustainable Development Goals of which SDG11 aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

High on the agenda is also the issue of good urban governance. This includes three principle groups of actors: government, the private sector and civil society. It recognizes that decisions are made based on complex relationships between many actors with different priorities. It is the reconciliation of these competing priorities that remains at the heart of New Urban Agenda. Urban governance is inextricably linked to the welfare of the citizenry and provides a platform, which will allow citizens to improve their social and economic conditions. This is a measurable feature of New Urban Agenda.

The successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda calls for endorsement of good urban governance. This is based on the acknowledged principles of *sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security*, and that these norms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The principle of ‘subsidiarity’ is crucial here and aims to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that action at Belfast City Council level is justified. This calls for greater participation of all stakeholders to reinvigorate trust in the urban

process. Such form of decentralization and local democracy should improve the responsiveness of policies and initiatives to the priorities and needs of citizens in the city.

In this regard, *'equity'* of access to decision-making processes and the basic necessities of urban life are critical for the successful delivery of LDP. At the same time, *'efficiency'* in the delivery of public services and in promoting local economic development is without doubt necessary for the future development of the city. In all of this the call for *'transparency and accountability'* of decision-makers and all stakeholders can only be reiterated. Without *'civic engagement and citizenship'*, *the new urban agenda and indeed the LDP for Belfast remain a passive exercise. Indeed, living together in the City of Belfast is not a passive exercise and all stakeholders, must actively contribute to the common good.*

Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the *'Civic Capital'* of the City of Belfast, which unfortunately remains fragmented and truncated due to the non-existence of an Executive and lack of vision of the City Managers. This calls for engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met. This also calls for commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region. The critical role of language and culture in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, thereby strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship is far more urgent for the city of Belfast. At the same time while demanding the application of new technologies in the creation of smart cities for efficient delivery of services, one cannot ignore the critical digital divide which remains embedded across the poorer parts of the city of Belfast.

Key Points are:

- Significance of New Urban Agenda and Habitat III through the philosophy of *'leave no one behind'*
- Community, leadership, participation and city governance in urban planning
- Principle groups of actors: government, private sector and civil society
- Recognition of urban decisions as *'complex'* and *'differing priorities'*
- Importance of the concepts of subsidiarity, sustainability, efficiency, accountability, transparency and equity in the urban
- Reconciling competing priorities and recognition of the city's own discourse
- *'Good urban governance'* and learning from each other's experiences – turning urban governance towards the welfare of the citizen. Bringing governance as close as possible to the citizen regarding decision making
- *'Trust'* and *'Subsidiarity'*

Insights and experiences from three practitioners exploring the Urban Lab focus

Flemming Borreskov, President IFHP

SuperKilen & Neighbourhood Empowerment in Copenhagen (Appendix 1)

Key points are:

- Development of a 'citizen participation model' and conducting the renewal of projects on equal terms with the City Council
- Building 'Trust' by removing silo mentality. The significance of decentralisation and transparency in planning principles. Thus, ensuring that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made to verify that actions at the City Council level is justified
- Citizen's involvement leads to the reinforcement of representational democracy
- SuperKilen involved developing cities for the people where leadership and governance are key to the formation of great cities
- City as a 'living organism' not a static built environment.
- Fiscal investment stimulating self-investment of tenants into their own hours
- Importance of the philosophies surrounding 'Thought Leaders' & 'Political Leaders' and the need for balance between the two
- The urban perspective (mesogeographical, the city) versus the streets perspective (the citizen)

Sophie Rasmussen, Urban Regeneration Officer, South Belfast Partnership Board (SBPB) & Director of Folktown CIC

Presented the following papers:

1. *Leave No One Behind: Stakeholders Review of the Belfast Local Development Plan*
2. *Markets Development: Challenges and Prospects from the Inner City (on behalf of Kathleen McCarthy, Manager of Markets Development Association and Chair Inner South Belfast Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership)*
3. *Spirit of South Belfast: A Cultural Plan (on behalf of Briege Arthurs, CEO South Belfast Partnership Board)*

Key points are:

- The significance of place making in South Belfast as a key starting point.
- Leading regeneration through *attracting, influencing and persuading*
- South Belfast as containing multi-dimensional and diverse neighbourhoods despite popular perception. However, areas neighbouring each other have very little engagement and lack cultural participation. 'Spirit of South Belfast' plan influenced by fieldwork in Haifa, Israel
- Local Development Plan and development of a deeper dialogue within its 4 main themes - SBPB 'Leave No One Behind' Symposium (Appendix 2)

- Connecting neighbourhoods and including of wide stakeholder network; cultural cohesion in South Belfast and community support networks. The need for stakeholder analyses to consider as many voices as possible towards establishing stakeholder networks
- Co-design workshops and bottom up regeneration planning considering three main variables: *Place-making, People and Participation*. Results generated a Intercultural-Intercommunity hub within unterritorialized space in South Belfast - 'a shared resource'
- Markets area in South Belfast voiced issues concerning vacant land, disconnection with city despite proximity, office developments in neighbouring walled Gasworks threatening the area
- Establishment of 'Tunnels' project (Appendix 3) in 'Markets Area' where concepts generated addressed issues of vacant land, asset management and necessary services in the area (including childcare, retail, employment and training and a heritage café)

Steven Donnelly, Doctoral Student, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queens University Belfast & Director of Blackstaff Music Belfast

Role of Young Civic Leaders in Urban Regeneration Initiative in Belfast

Key points are:

- The value of young peoples' voices in urban regeneration concepts, data collection, analysis and implementation. Inspiring a new wave of urban planners and thinkers through the Young Civic Leaders Northern Ireland (Appendix 4)
- Instilling confidence and ownership within young people by integrating them into the pre-planning and conceptual stages of regeneration and property development
- Connecting universities and teaching practices with the surrounding urban environment, its organisations and urban actors through live regeneration projects - *"From the classroom to the city"*. This was exemplified through a collaborative project known as Contained Belfast with T13 Belfast in October 2014. The pop-up project enumerated several activities including cultural events, music, comedy, film and sport event to stimulate data collection. Results from initial public enquiry on site regeneration were digitised by a 3D artist (Appendix 5).
- **Pop-Up Urbanism** as an experimental platform for data collection, inspiring collaboration and guiding design appropriately. Taking the planning conversation to a wider stakeholder network
- Pop-Up Urbanism is defined as *"Innovative, cost effective and sometimes sophisticated, temporary solutions within public spaces- in addressing context specific urban issues. The purpose of this is to guide planning, design and management towards inclusive urban development and sustainability"* (Definition by Kumar & Donnelly; inspired by Finn, 2014)

Action planning - what will we do next?

Arising from discussion, Urban Lab 4 identified the following action areas for stakeholders:

- Building trust as essential to urban decision making and the creation of a transparent accountable systems.
- Ensuring *decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen* and that constant checks are made to verify that actions at the City Council level is justified
- Starting with small projects: Identify the low hanging fruits for implementation towards trust in community building and stakeholder networking.
- Mapping of capacity-building initiatives on the ground for both governmental bodies and citizens to contribute and influence urban planning schemes
- Action Plans emphasising co-design and ownership of urban plans and projects across public, private and people's partnership (*PPPP*)
- Acknowledging key projects of scale/ micro-projects contributing to urban fabric and community empowerment
- Heritage and prosperous streets - revaluing heritage ("Here Heritage is a living knowledge of history")
- Celebrating Best Practices in the City of Belfast as an Exhibition
- Development of civic leadership for the City by targeting primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Belfast
- Promoting asset-based approach to skill development and thereby organising inclusive community involvement
- Empowering the citizens of Belfast to participate effectively in decision-making processes is a must to deepen the '*Civic Capital*' of the City of Belfast
- Engendering a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants, fostering social cohesion, inclusion, and safety in peaceful and pluralistic societies, where the needs of all inhabitants are met
- Commitment to sustainably leverage natural and cultural heritage in cities and human settlements, which are of deep value to the citizens of the city and the region
- The critical role of language and culture in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, thereby strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship is far more urgent for the city of Belfast
- Application of new technologies in the creation of smart cities for efficient delivery of services, one cannot ignore the *critical digital divide* which remains embedded across the poorer parts of the city of Belfast

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Appendix 1: Location map of SuperKilen



Appendix 2: South Belfast Partnership Board Symposium on ‘Leave No One Behind’ (March 2017)



Appendix 3: *Tunnels Project, Belfast – before and after (concept)*



Appendix 4: *Young Civic Leaders Northern Ireland (July 2015)*



Appendix 5: *Contained Project, Belfast – before and after (concept)*



Belfast Urban Thinkers Campus

Urban Lab 5:

Physical links between City and Inner City

Ulster Reform Club,

4 Royal Avenue,

Belfast BT1

1st June 2017

Intensification and Densification of the inner city

Preventing urban sprawl, and the loss of culturally- and economically- active residents to the suburbs, is an issue in many cities but notably Belfast. Retaining and attracting a diverse resident and business community is key. The Lab felt that the local planning authority should be reinforcing this through the planning process and policy, and by encouraging the societal mindset shift that may be needed to achieve this eg. promoting the 'living above the shop'-type ethos.

There was also a consensus that cities need to avoid the 'Bilbao effect' – namely avoid creating major destinations which may attract new visitors, but in reality can act as a drain and hindrance to local community networks and businesses (as the Guggenheim has been to local artistic/creative communities in central Bilbao).

Removing the Physical Barriers

Many cities, but Belfast in particular, are faced with significant physical barriers to movement for some inner city communities. In Belfast the Westlink and the East Side 'shatter zone' ensure that some communities remain physically isolated and inward-looking. The municipality and the Transport Authority should jointly evaluate and prepare a strategic vision to address the city's spatial barriers, and consider trialling low-cost temporary/interim solutions (as often occurs in European countries notably The Netherlands). Consideration also need to be given to connections to radial routes, as many commented that E-W linkages in the city are poor; and the connectivity between transport hubs ("get the skeleton right before trying to add muscle").

Whilst not a physical barrier in Belfast it was strongly agreed that there are currently significant governance and administrative barriers, leading to a set of competing spatial plans & strategies being developed by neighbouring authorities when there really needs to be a metropolitan-level approach. The importance of key individuals as leaders/mediators/champions was also agreed as critical.

The Lab also agreed that for Belfast there was a need to overcome psychological and cultural barriers too, but removing any physical barriers which may underpin these was a first step.

Importance of Quality of the Built Environment, notably Public Space

Whilst streets are critically important as connectors and creators of the urban living environment, they won't work unless they have attractors and destinations. The quality of their design and upkeep is paramount, with both being an ideal opportunity for a true 2-way transparent engagement with citizens in co-creation and long-term custodianship. Streets also need to reflect the lives of the citizens that already live in the neighbourhood. Cost-efficient interim/meanwhile uses can absolutely be a part of this drive, and a great way to test drive ideas with residents (and possibly even crowdfund, as for example with the 'Yellow Bridge' (Luchtsingel) in Rotterdam).

As a 19th Century Select Committee on Metropolitan Improvements commented *"Posterity never complains of extravagance in public works, but it always does of parsimony"*: the Lab very much urges we choose posterity over parsimony!

“Slow Urbanism”

A slower, organic rate of change in the city facilitates and supports behavioural change. It allows accidents, ‘edginess’ and/or unplanned uses to emerge, of which citizens can take ownership of and champion. More critically it allows citizens the time and space to develop trust with the promoters of new development, and to move beyond the tipping point from resistance to agreement & championing.

Inherent within this also is an acceptance that change in cities has to be a long-term financial commitment, with a longer ROI. This may be resisted by private investors, but is possible – as illustrated by the likes of Manchester ONE public-private JV in Manchester.

Activation and Animation of Spaces & Places

History has shown that the ‘build it & they will come’ approach is rarely successful. The Lab was unified in the view that physical integration alone of the city and inner city does not and will not work. Long-term investment in both horizontal and vertical activation & animation is needed.

New spaces & places need time - sometimes a generation or more – to bed themselves into the psycho-geography of the city and the mental map of citizens; psychological barriers as well as physical barriers will need to be overcome. Citizens and visitors alike need to be given reasons to want to use, care about and care for spaces and places, with care to be taken that we do not cater for both of those groups rather than just one. The best form of ‘policing’ the city is active surveillance by the users of that space acting as informal, almost inferred, guardians or custodians.

In Belfast the need to create equitable ‘meeting spaces’ for all communities is paramount. The Lab felt that the municipality should also consider using integrating civic/public uses within new development proposals as a catalyst: for example integrating a school or a creche into new city centre developments. As someone commented, children are the ultimate socialisers!

Transparency in Investment Decisions

A key factor in gaining community buy-in the new city spaces and places is facilitating involvement and ownership of the decision-making process. Whilst full-blown participatory budgeting (as very successfully implemented in the city of Lisbon in Portugal) would be the ideal scenario, adopting component elements of this participatory budgeting process alone will go a long way to an acceptable solution. Options for investment should be assessed against a range of criteria including socio-economic and community considerations, and the promoters of the development should make that criteria transparent and open to the public; citizens should be involved in shortlisting and/or selection. Tools such as GIS should be used to analyse existing movement patterns and explain the rationale behind proposed new routes/movement patterns to citizens.

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